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Chairman: Mr. STEIN (Vice-Chairman) (Germany)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions : Mr. MSELLE

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In the absence of Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe), M. Stein (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 114 : PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/51/6, A/51/16 (Parts I and II))

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (continued)

Programmes 20-25 and 9

1. Mrs. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that other Main Committees had discussed matters which were outside their mandates; for example, the Third Committee had considered a document on budget implications the preceding day. Under the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee was responsible for administrative and budgetary questions, and her delegation was firmly opposed to practices which could only hamper the already highly complex work of the Committee. In view of the urgency of the problem, she requested that the Chairman do whatever was necessary to put an end to that situation.

2. The CHAIRMAN said that the matter had been referred to the President of the General Assembly and that the Committee would be informed of the outcome.

3. Mrs. INCERA (Costa Rica) endorsed the statement by the Cuban representative and recalled that in its resolution 45/248 B, the General Assembly had reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters and had expressed its concern at the tendency of its substantive committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters.

4. Furthermore, she recalled that during the general debate the Group of 77 had asked the Secretariat to transmit its proposals regarding priorities among the subprogrammes since, as indicated in the regulations governing programme planning, they were essential for the negotiations on the proposed medium-term plan. The Group of 77 hoped that that information would already have been transmitted when the Committee began informal consultations on the matter.

Programme 20. Humanitarian assistance

5. The Chairman drew attention to paragraph 207 of the report of the Committee on Programme and Coordination in which the latter recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 20.

6. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, with which Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia associated themselves, said that humanitarian assistance was a major programme priority and that the capacity of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for dealing, inter alia, with complex emergencies, the provision of disaster relief, demining and ensuring the effective response of the international community, should be strengthened. Furthermore, the European Union strongly supported the activities, including

those of the Economic and Social Council, to strengthen coordination within the United Nations system as a whole for the distribution of humanitarian assistance and recalled the relevance of reports prepared to that effect, including the report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/50/687. Lastly, the European Union fully supported the adoption of the work plan for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs outlined in programme 20.

7. Mrs. PEÑA (Mexico) endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) concerning programme 20, which was one of the few programmes prepared by the Secretariat regarding which no changes had been proposed.

8. Her delegation wished to know when the views of the other Main Committees on aspects of the medium-term plan relating to their work would be available as official documents. The Secretariat had already informed the Committee that the reply of the Third Committee was a very long document and that it would take nearly two weeks to translate it into the various languages - which would be a distinct improvement considering the time required to translate certain meeting documents.

9. Mr. ACOKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Chairman of the First, Second and Third Committees had already transmitted their replies. Documents Control had indicated that the translation of those documents (comprising a total of 75 pages) would not be completed until the end of November. The Committee therefore had to decide whether it wished to suspend consideration of agenda item 114 while awaiting the required information. Moreover, contrary to established practice, the Chairman of the Sixth Committee had transmitted his reply concerning programme 4 (Legal Affairs), which had been issued as document A/C.6/51/8, directly to the President of the General Assembly.

10. Mrs. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that there appeared to be a certain lack of coordination in the procedures which the Main Committees followed to transmit their views. Moreover, the bureaux of the committees should have endeavoured to provide a summary of the proceedings rather than a compilation of statements from the various delegations. The Cuban delegation had no objection to deferring consideration of agenda item 114 until the Committee had received the required documents.

11. Turning to a general matter which was of great importance to her delegation, she recalled that when the Group of 77 had requested the Secretariat to submit proposals regarding priorities among the subprogrammes, she had insisted that the proposals be transmitted before the informal consultations began. She drew attention in particular to rule 103.16 of the Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, which clearly stated that the Secretary-General, when preparing the plan, must indicate priorities among the subprogrammes. It also was relevant to note that the General Assembly had not yet adopted the new presentation of the medium-term plan, which was only indicative in nature at the moment. Furthermore, in its report on its thirty-sixth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had invited the General Assembly to consider its conclusions and recommendations on the proposed medium-term plan, subject to the adoption of a final decision by the General

Assembly on the programmatic structure of the proposed medium-term plan [A/51/16 (part II), para. 12].

12. In any event, the Fifth Committee must, at some point, take up the question of the new structure proposed for the medium-term plan.

13. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that his delegation, which fully endorsed the statement by the Group of 77 and China, attached great importance to programme 20 and approved its scope and objectives. Bangladesh, a country that was particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, knew how essential relief and other emergency humanitarian assistance were. He was gratified to note that the need to promote transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development was recognized in the programme. On the other hand, the statement of planned activities did not specify how they would be implemented. It was important to take account of the specific circumstances of each country and to identify carefully the victims of disasters and emergencies. Similarly, the arrangements relating to rehabilitation and development activities implemented in the context of humanitarian assistance must be determined in cooperation with the countries concerned and United Nations agencies operating in those countries.

14. Ms PEÑA (Mexico) asked whether translation had begun of the documents containing the views of the various committees on the proposed medium-term plan. She wondered whether the comments concerning the length of those documents were not a pretext not to issue them. The views of the committees must be issued as official documents and not as informal papers.

15. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), responding to the question concerning the priority of subprogrammes, said that at a previous meeting he had already provided lengthy explanations on the matter and addressed the structure of the medium-term plan. The medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 had not been formulated in a vacuum. It represented the conclusion of joint efforts by the Member States represented in CPC and the Fifth Committee, and by the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). Those endeavours had led to significant changes in the structure of the plan.

16. So far, in accordance with programme planning regulation 3.6, the plan had been submitted by programme and objective and not by organizational unit. There were currently 45 programmes: a single department was sometimes responsible for implementing several major programmes, with different units implementing subprogrammes, hence the need to establish priorities among subprogrammes. However, the General Assembly had understood that the system was not working satisfactorily. It had thus proposed that the new medium-term plan should be established on the basis of an entirely different approach, which had been done pursuant to its decision 50/452. Nevertheless, if that new formula were not accepted, the Assembly could always decide to revert to the former structure.

17. The 25 programmes established in the context of the new structure were each the responsibility of a programme manager or an organizational unit and comprised several subprogrammes to be implemented by the various services or divisions within each department. Further, in accordance with the recommendations of CPC, six priority areas had been identified. Set out in paragraph 61 of the Note (A/52/6 (Note)), they corresponded to the priorities

defined in the Perspective. In that context the establishment of priorities among subprogrammes was no longer a necessity. In the view of the Secretariat the new structure represented a significant improvement over the current system and would facilitate the preparation of future budgets. Of course ultimately the decision lay with Member States.

18. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee), responding to the representative of Mexico, said that he had not said that replies from committees would not be issued, but that the three committees in question insisted that the 75 pages of statements should be issued in extenso in every language. Given the number of bodies currently meeting, a delay of two weeks seemed not only reasonable but inevitale.

19. Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that she had returned to the question of priorities among subprogrammes because she had not been satisfied with the responses given to her previously. As noted by the Controller, the medium-term plan had been prepared in accordance with a new formula, which was yet to be approved by the General Assembly. Decision 50/452 certainly authorized the Secretary-General to begin preparation of the proposed medium-term plan, but the current Regulations, which had not changed, should have been respected. The new structure of the plan was not without advantage, and the work undertaken was not completely futile, but it was still the case that, pending further developments, the Regulations required the Secretariat to propose priorities to the Assembly.

Programme 21. Protection and assistance to refugees

20. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 213 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in which it recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 21, with a number of modifications.

21. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) and Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that their delegations endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC, which should be incorporated in the resolution to be adopted on the medium-term plan.

22. Mr. NOUR (Egypt) said that his delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

Programme 22. Palestinian refugees

23. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 217 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in which it recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 22, with a number of modifications.

24. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC, which should be incorporated in the resolution to be adopted on the medium-term plan.

25. Mr. SULAIMAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government attached great importance to the programme of assistance to Palestinian refugees, which was being implemented by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency of Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He recalled that the General Assembly had decided in resolution 3331 B (XXIX) that the expense for salaries of international staff in the service of UNRWA should with effect from

1 January 1975 be financed by the regular budget of the United Nations. He also noted that, according to paragraph 22.8 of the medium-term plan, the Agency's ability to carry out its work programme depended on voluntarily contributed funds being made available to it by the international community. He therefore asked what proportion of the Agency's expenses was actually financed from the regular budget. The programme was particularly important because the question of Palestine had still not been settled and the refugees continued to need the services of the Agency.

26. Mr. GUTTEROD (Norway) said that in the 1994-1995 biennium the Agency had incurred a deficit of $14.4 million, so that 1995 was the third consecutive deficit year. In June 1995, the Agency had had to postpone salary increases in order to save $12 million and prevent the deficit which, without that deferment, would have reached $16 million for that year, from reducing its working capital fund to zero. Along with the measures taken in 1993 which remained in force, that measure had adversely affected the quality of services provided by the Agency. The Agency's deficit had become chronic, and cast doubt on the capacity of UNRWA to fulfil its mandate. The needs which the Agency had to meet, in the areas of education, health, and relief and social services, were increasing 5 per cent per year, and ways would have to be found of financing the corresponding activities. The slow-down or elimination of some of the Agency's basic activities were liable to have political consequences and destabilizing effects. His delegation urged all Governments to consider the possibility of increasing their contributions so that the Agency could maintain its activities and, if possible, resume the activities which it had had to abandon because of the austerity measures it had been forced to take.

27. Mr. MOKTEFI (Algeria) said that his delegation was particularly concerned about the implementation of programme 22. In view of the problems faced by the Palestinian refugees, assistance to them must be maintained and the Agency must be given the necessary resources to provide that assistance. Algeria therefore supported the recommendations of CPC on programme 22.

28. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt) said that his delegation also attached great importance to the implementation of the programme for Palestinian refugees. Noting that the Agency's ability to carry out its work programme depended on voluntary contributions from the international community, he called on States Members to fulfil their responsibilities in that respect. Egypt supported the recommendation of CPC that programme 22 should be approved, with certain modifications.

29. Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) and Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) said that their delegations strongly supported the activities undertaken under programme 22 and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

30. Mr. ELMONTASSER (Lybian Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation also supported programme 22 and hoped that the current strategy, outlined in paragraph 22.4 of the document, would be expanded. Because of the lack of resources, the services provided by the Agency were insufficient. If the programme was to be more than a mere declaration of intent, the international community must provide the necessary funds for its implementation.

31. Mr. ZHANG (China) and Mr. ZULKIPLI (Malaysia) said that their Governments, which also attached great importance to programme 22, made contributions to UNRWA every year. They supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

32. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that Kuwait also supported programme 22, which was a very important programme. The situation of Palestinian refugees, which was currently very difficult, must be improved.

33. Mr. TAKASU (Controller) confirmed that UNRWA was currently experiencing serious financial difficulties and could not maintain its activities without the assistance of the international community, since only its international staff was financed from the regular budget. It was therefore to be hoped that the appeal for voluntary contributions made by Norway in particular would be heeded. Responding specifically to the question asked by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, he said that the expenses charged to the regular budget related to the salaries of 92 staff members and amounted to $22.6 million for the 1996-1997 biennium.

Programme 23. Information

34. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 223 of the report of CPC in which CPC recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 23, with certain modifications.

35. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico), Mr. NOUR (Egypt) and Mrs. INCERA (Costa Rica) said that they supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

36. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that it was very important for the Department of Public Information to adapt itself to the ever changing environment of the information world, evaluate its goals constantly and make sound use of the resources. The Committee on Information, which had an important role to play in that respect, should carry out a thorough review of the mandates which existed in that area. To that end, the Department should be requested to produce a more comprehensive list of mandates governing its activities than that made available to CPC at its thirty-sixth session.

37. When analyzing the outputs of the programme, it was appropriate to ask whether the Department had always made the best use of the resources available to it to explain the successes of the United Nations and to counter criticism of the Organization. The European Union believed that, in the current difficult budgetary situation, the Department should seek to take greater advantage of the latest technological advances. It supported the idea that a thorough evaluation should be made of the results of the network of the United Nations information centres so that that instrument could be used in the most efficient possible manner. Similarly, it recalled that it had strongly supported the proposal for an independent evaluation of the activities of the Dag Hammarskjold Library, as recommended by the Committee on Information.

38. Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that her delegation supported the activities of the Department of Public Information and endorsed the recommendations of CPC. It asked why the Committee on Information had not considered programme 23 when it had met in 1996.

39. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh firmly supported the activities envisaged in programme 23. It attached particular importance to the information centres, whose activities in the field should be conducted in the local language and adapted to local culture. The centres must be independent from other offices in the same country and must have control of their financial and administrative resources.

40. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that although he had not spoken earlier, he nevertheless supported the other programmes which had been considered. He wished to stress the importance his Government attached to the role of the Department of Public Information, especially in the countries which had few modern means of communication. Uganda would always be in favour of strengthening the Department so that it was fully able to carry out its mandate.

41. Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) said that his delegation fully supported programme 23. It believed that the Department of Public Information had a very important role to play. It attached particular importance to the activities of the information centres, and would welcome any strengthening of their activity.

Programme 24. Administrative services

42. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 231 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in which the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the proposed programme 24 with a number of modifications.

43. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, but drew attention to the rather curious formulation employed by the Committee, which recommended approval by the General Assembly "of the narrative of the activities of the proposed programme 24". She reiterated her delegation's view that programmes 24 and 25 could be combined into a single programme, since they dealt with complementary aspects of the same question.

44. Ms. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union generally supported the objectives of subprogramme 24.1 on management services, including those articulated in paragraph 24.6, subparagraphs (b) and (e). With regard to subprogramme 24.3 on human resource management, the European Union supported the establishment of a career development policy in the Secretariat for all types of appointments, as part of the objective stated in paragraph 24.12 (a). With regard to the objectives stated in subparagraph (i) of the same paragraph, the European Union believed that any reference to the professional reconciliation of disputes and the efficient handling of appeals and disciplinary cases would be premature pending consideration by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposals for reforming the internal system of justice. In connection with subprogramme 24.4 on support services, the European Union attached importance to the Organization being provided with an efficient, transparent, competitive and fair system of procurement. With reference to both subprogramme 24.3 on human resource management and subprogramme 24.5 on conference services, the European Union continued to believe that considerable scope existed for increased outsourcing of activities in areas such as printing on the part of the Office of Conference of Support Services and cost of living surveys conducted by the Office of Human Resources

Management, and that that should be reflected among the objectives of the subprogramme.

45. Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that she supported the activities included under programme 24 as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in the light of her delegation's earlier comments on the programme structure of the proposed medium-term plan.

Programme 25. Internal oversight

46. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 237 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in which the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the proposed programme 25 with a number of modifications.

47. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation would be willing to approve the proposed programme 25, provided that it was combined with programme 24.

48. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union attached the highest importance to the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and was of the view that internal oversight must remain a separate programme in order to safeguard the operational independence of the Office, as provided for in General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 48/218. The European Union also wished to emphasize the necessity for the Secretariat to ensure the implementation of the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

49. Mr. ELMONTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation supported the proposed programme 25 and believed that both internal and external oversight helped to ensure sounder management of the funds contributed by Member States.

50. Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) referred to her earlier comments on programme 24 and said that, while her delegation recognized the importance of the activities proposed under programme 25, there was no reason why those activities should not be incorporated into programme 24 on administrative services.

51. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that in the light of the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, his delegation supported the adoption of programme 25. In order for it to attain its objectives, internal oversight must be a separate programme. His delegation therefore could not support the proposal to combine programme 25 with programme 24.

Programme 9. Trade and development

52. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to paragraph 111 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in which the Committee indicated that it had requested the Secretary-General to submit a version of programme 9 revised in the light of the results of UNCTAD IX as well as of the decisions that might be adopted by the Trade and Development Board at its forty-third regular session.

53. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the revised version of programme 9, said that the revised programme took account of the major new developments that had taken place in the field of trade and development. The new programme had been referred during the summer to the Working Party of the Trade and Development Board and approved, with certain modifications, by the Board at its October session. The principal modification concerned subprogramme 9.5 on least developed countries, landlocked and island developing countries. The new paragraph 9.24, which had been inserted at the end of subprogramme 9.5, reflected the consensus that had been reached on that issue among member States of UNCTAD.

54. Mrs. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the medium-term plan should reflect the importance attached to the work of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. As a result of the restructuring of UNCTAD, programme 9 had undergone a major change. The modifications introduced to subprogramme 9.5 were of particular concern. The fact that a separate programme which had been under the responsibility of UNCTAD in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (programme 15, Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, and special programmes) had become a subprogramme was a matter of grave concern for the countries involved and for the Group of 77 in particular.

55. The Group of 77 and China proposed a number of modifications to the initial version of programme 9 (A/51/6 (Prog.9)). The title of subprogramme 9.5 should read as follows: "Landlocked developing countries and small island developing States". In paragraph 9.7, subparagraph (d), after the words "least developed countries", the words "landlocked developing countries and small island developing States" should be added; in paragraph 9.12, subparagraph (d), after "developing countries", the words "in particular the least developed and landlocked developing countries and small island developing States" should be added. In paragraph 9.13, after subparagraph (d), insert a new subparagraph (d) bis to read: "To assist the least developed and landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to overcome the special problems they faced in developing enterprises". Paragraph 9.20 should be completely modified so as to retain most of the former programme 15, taking into account the new mandates contained in General Assembly resolutions and the outcome of the United Nations conferences, in particular the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Finally, the Group of 77 and China requested the Secretary-General to submit the revised version of the proposed programme 9 taking fully into account the results of the forty-third session of the Trade and Development Board.

56. Mr. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, as well as Norway, recalled that the European Union had indicated that the programme should reflect the outcome of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He welcomed the consensus that had been reached on the programme in Geneva, which was reflected in the revised version of programme 9.

57. M. ALOM (Bangladesh) said that he supported the statement made by the Group of 77 and China, and drew attention to subprogramme 9.1. While the globalization process could yield some benefits for developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, it could also have the effect of marginalizing them. With respect to subparagraph (c) of paragraph 9.11, he proposed that UNCTAD should examine not only successful development experiences, but also unsuccessful ones, in order to draw lessons and to suggest corrective measures. He fully shared the view of the Group of 77 and China that subprogramme 9.5 should become a separate programme. He recalled that paragraph 9.24 was the result of the intensive negotiations which had taken place at the October session of the Trade and Development Board, held in Geneva, and stressed that the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries should be given adequate means and enough resources to fulfil its mandate.

58. Mr. FAGUNDES (Brazil) said that he welcomed the reforms adopted by UNCTAD, which concerned not only its programme of work but also its structure and its relations with other international bodies. His delegation believed that the debate on programme 9 should take into account the consensus reached on the role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development issues. He stressed the need to continue to devote special attention to least developed, landlocked and small island developing States.

59. Mrs. SEALY MONTEITH (Jamaica) said that she fully supported the statement made by the Group of 77 and China on programme 9, as well as the amendments proposed with a view to improving the text of the programme. The discontinuation of the Division for the Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries in no way reduced the severity of the problems faced by those countries or the need to address them fully, and the Barbados Programme of Action must remain the foundation for the activities of the United Nations system in that area.

60. Mr. ATIYANTO (Indonesia) stressed the importance of programme 9 and reaffirmed his country's support for UNCTAD. He unreservedly supported the statement and proposals made by the Group of 77 and China, which reflected the position adopted by the Group in the Second Committee.

61. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) recalled that his delegation had expressed particular interest in programme 9 at the meeting of the Trade and Development Board in Geneva. He associated himself with the comments and proposals made by the Group of 77 and China, particularly with respect to subprogramme 9.5, and hoped that the Member States would adopt the proposed amendments so that his country could support the programme.

62. Mr. TOYA (Japan) said that his delegation had endorsed the revised text submitted by the Trade and Development Board's Working Party. However, he was still awaiting a response from his country's Mission in Geneva, and reserved the right to make observations at a later stage, in either a formal meeting or informal consultations.

63. Mr. RAMLAL (Trinidad and Tobago) reaffirmed his country's interest in the issue of small island developing States, and said that he fully shared the

concerns expressed by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994, had given UNCTAD a special role with respect to the development of those States. His delegation therefore hoped to receive assurances that the mandate of UNCTAD, as defined in the Barbados Programme of Action, would be maintained in the revised programme. In particular, he had reservations about the formulation of paragraph 9.23, which made only a passing reference to the problems of small island developing States.

64. Mr. ELMONTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and with the statements of other speakers on the subject. In order to establish an equitable new international economic order, all barriers to trade must be eliminated. Moreover, the embargo imposed against certain developing countries must be lifted, the assets frozen in foreign banks must be released and the protectionism that affected the products of developing countries must be eliminated. In addition, commodities must be given improved access to markets so that the adverse consequences of price and exchange rate fluctuations could be mitigated. Likewise, it was necessary to offset the effects of negative transfers of capital from developed countries to developing ones and to take into account new consumption patterns, especially in developing countries. Lastly, care should be taken to avoid marginalizing the least developed countries by forcing them to adopt reforms. The industrialized countries should support the exports, and alleviate the debt burden, of developing countries.

65. Ms. LAWLOR (United States of America) said that the revised version of programme 9 essentially followed the text of the Midrand Declaration, adopted by UNCTAD at its ninth session. Apart from a few details which it would address in informal consultations, her delegation supported the overall content of programme 9.

66. Ms. BUERGO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) reaffirmed her country's support for UNCTAD and for all of the activities carried out by that body in fulfilment of its mandate. With specific reference to subprogramme 9.5 on least developed, landlocked and island developing countries, the Cuban delegation welcomed the new name of the subprogramme, which reflected the comments made by the delegations concerned. However, the suggestions put forward by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, which she fully supported, should also be incorporated into the final text. With respect to paragraph 9.24, she noted that the coordination of activities, which had formerly been the responsibility of the newly discontinued Division for the Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries, would be carried out by the Office of the Special Coordinator. She also noted that only the least developed countries were mentioned in some parts of the subprogramme, such as paragraph 9.21, and hoped that all of the categories of countries dealt with in the subprogramme would be mentioned in the final version. Likewise, she hoped that the comments made by the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya would be reflected in the explanatory text on the programme as a whole.

67. Mr. ERDENEBILEG (Mongolia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. UNCTAD should continue to play a leading role. Programme 9, and particularly

subprogramme 9.5, were especially important to Mongolia. Since the Division for the Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries had been discontinued, the Office of the Special Coordinator should be strengthened.

68. Mr. FATTAH (Egypt), endorsing the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and comments by other delegations, in particular Brazil and Jamaica, said that the General assembly was the forum for considering issues relating to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The issue of why the special programme of assistance to the Palestinian people had not been mentioned in subprogramme 9.5 would be raised by his delegation in informal consultations.

69. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) noted with satisfaction that programme 9 included activities relating to least developed, landlocked and island developing countries. Bearing in mind the proposals that had been made by various delegations, her delegation thought it preferable to wait for the reaction of her Government's Mission at Geneva before taking part in informal consultations with a view to formulating a text that could command consensus.

70. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica) said that, at all events, the position of the Group of 77 was reflected in the letter sent by the Chairman of the Second Committee to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

71. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to comment on the remaining programmes.

72. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) referred to programme 19 (Human rights). His Government attached great importance to that programme and wished to emphasize that the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights should not diminish the role of intergovernmental bodies. Specifically, he wished to know whether or not the interim measures envisaged under the restructuring exercise had been implemented. He wondered whether it had really been necessary to resort to a firm of consultants in order to elaborate an initial restructuring plan, which had subsequently been rejected. His delegation would also appreciate clarification if the procedure that had been followed in elaborating the second plan, which still did not fully reflect the Centre's actual programme of work. His delegation wanted more information about the exact purpose of the proposed efficiency measures, their consequences, and the financial impact of the restructuring.

73. Mr. YAMAK (Turkey), referring to programme 11 (Human settlements), said that his delegation endorsed the revised text, which reflected the consensus that had emerged at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul.

74. Mr. MAINA (Kenya) also referred to the revised version of programme 11. With specific reference to the role of regional and interregional agencies, it should be stressed that the implementation of the subprogrammes would require a strengthening of the coordination functions carried out by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. The Centre should therefore be provided with the necessary resources to enable it to carry out its mandates and responsibilities as effectively as possible.

75. Mr. GUTTEROD (Norway) referred to programme 10 (Environment). He fully supported the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination regarding programme 10 but wished to point out that the priorities and decisions stemming from the comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21, which would be undertaken in 1997, should be taken into account in the medium-term plan.

76. M. KELLY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union as well as the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, referred to programme 4 (Legal affairs). The promotion of justice and international law, under subprogramme 4.3, should be a priority objective of the United Nations. Of particular importance was the establishment of an international criminal court; if that undertaking was to be brought to a successful conclusion, it must benefit from all the support measures listed in paragraph 4.16. Moreover, the International Court of Justice must be provided with sufficient means to enable it to carry out its functions in accordance with the Rules of Court, including those specifying that submissions by the parties should be translated into the working languages of the Court.

77. Every effort should be made to publish the Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, mentioned in paragraph 4.4, subparagraph (f).

78. The conclusion of status-of-forces agreements arising from the activities of peace-keeping missions should also be identified as an important objective of subprogramme 4.1, and referred to accordingly in paragraph 4.0. Concerning subprogramme 4.5, the International Trade Law Branch should closely monitor the work of other international organizations active in international trade law in order to avoid any duplication of activity and prevent inconsistencies in the results of their respective work.

79. His delegation also wished to draw attention to the sharp increase in the workload of the Office of Legal Affairs which, despite maintaining virtually the same staffing level for 12 years, had had to deal with a number of new and increasingly diverse tasks, as could be seen from the narrative to programme 4. Since its work was fundamental to the Organization, the Office should be given the resources to carry out its work as effectively as possible.

80. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), replying to the comments made by the Ugandan delegation regarding the Centre for Human Rights and programme 19, said that the restructuring of the Centre also came under the item on the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. Briefly recapping, he explained that the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on being appointed in 1994, had embarked on a rationalization of the Centre's structure. In doing so, he had relied to some extent on the report of the former Office for Inspections and Investigations, which had revealed a proliferation of organizational units, duplicate functions and excessive compartmentalization, and on instructions from the General Assembly that a new service should be established with responsibility for the promotion and protection of the right to development. At the same time, the High Commissioner had turned to a firm of consultants hired through a process of competitive bidding, which had been made possible by a contribution from one Member State. It was on the basis of all of those inputs that the restructuring plan had been submitted to the General Assembly in document A/C.5/50/71.

81. With specific reference to implementation of the reform of the Centre, the implementation of the initial so-called transitional measures had begun on 1 October 1996 and it was envisaged that the new structure, into which the Centre's staff would gradually fit, would become operational in the spring of 1997. The High Commissioner had provided information on the progress of the restructuring exercise on a number of occasions, to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Third Committee and in consultations with Member States in Geneva.

82. Mr. ODAGA-JALOMAYO (Uganda) said that his delegation reserved the right to come back to the issue at a later date in the light of the explanation which the Controller had just provided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.